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FULL STEAM AHEAD FOR '46

A transcribed talk by the Secretary of Agriculture, Clinton P. Anderson, recorded December 26, 1945. Time: 6 minutes and 35 seconds, without announcer's parts.

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TRANSCRIPTION

SECRETARY ANDERSON:

Only twelve months ago the farmers of the United States were busy making plans to meet the tremendous need for food in another year of war. Today, farmers are setting goals again...this time to produce the food and other farm products needed by our country in 1946, a year of peace.

Victory and peace have not diminished the almost unlimited needs for food. We still have our own people to feed, a people busy with rebuilding a peacetime economy. We still have large military forces at home and abroad. We cannot forget the needs of our allied comrades in arms who now face hunger and want because the war destroyed or damaged their crops and livestock, their farmlands, transportation, and processing systems. Yes...we still have a huge job to do on the farms of the United States.

In addition, we face in 1946 the vital task of converting our war-time agriculture toward the kind of an agriculture we want in the peacetime years ahead. This conversion is not a simple adjustment that can be made in a single year--it will take many years. It is not a job that can be left to chance--it involves decisions by farmers everywhere, with careful planning and cooperation by farmers with their neighbors, in communities, in counties, in states, in regions, and in the Nation. It involves making decisions now that will affect the lives and fortunes of all of us for many years to come. That is why we should think carefully through our agricultural situation, making sure that our decisions are made in the light of full information, are made democratically, and are made with all the wisdom we can command.

In planning ahead, farmers must take into account that agriculture today is different--far different--than it was twenty, ten, or even five years ago. Farmers have made astounding technical progress in growing more products with less labor--during the war we turned out a third more with five million fewer people on the farms. There are great new opportunities for farmers and their families in the dynamic, scientific, highly mechanized agriculture ahead. But there are some serious questions to be answered too. One of these--the main one as we look beyond 1946, is: How are we going to use our great farm productive capacity?

There is no question as to what farmers want. They want to produce. They like to produce. Their main contribution to the well-being of their country is to harvest bumper crops, turn out well-finished livestock, send floods of milk to market, and otherwise provide the building materials of a good diet for the United States. That is the kind of agriculture we want to plan for the future--one that enables the Nation to set a good table. We should realize how important that is, when we see hunger in the war-torn world, when we see countries that don't have the land, or the farm skill, to produce the food they need.

Farmers already have indicated the direction they want to go in 1946. They have their guide book in the form of the 1946 production goals suggested to States. These goals call for 356 million acres of crops, fourteen and a half million acres more than average pre-war plantings. These goals, crop by crop, acre by acre, point the way toward the production we need--the kind of food we need and the amounts we need--to feed this country decently and to meet our obligations to our Allies.

And farmers are ready to provide a rich market for industry and labor. They know how many tractors, trucks, milking machines, combines, hay balers and the like they want to buy. They are ready to take home hundreds of thousands of automobiles, radios, refrigerators, and other manufactured goods--as soon as they can get them.

However, looking beyond 1946, farmers know that they can maintain full production indefinitely only when the rest of the economy is in high gear; only if city workers have jobs and plenty of food dollars to spend with the farmer. One of the great discoveries of the war was just how hungry the families in this country have been at times and how much they will eat when there are plenty of food dollars in their pay envelopes. We have seen how, as wage earner's incomes rise, they start eating more eggs and vegetables, then more meats and dairy products, and then more fruits. There is no question about it: The farmer's greatest opportunity for expanding his markets is right at home in the great food needs of a fully-employed, well-fed United States.

We know, too, that maintenance of a fully-productive agriculture alongside a fully-productive industry is going to take much broad-scale, give-and-take cooperation between our economic groups. Farmers are willing to do their part. They are willing to plan a well-balanced, diversified type of agriculture that can produce the kind of food the country needs and can produce it at prices that are fair to the consumer and to the producer. But agriculture cannot do that whole job alone. It is willing to be the lead horse, but it cannot go ahead indefinitely if the rest of the team lags in the traces. If we are to achieve full use of the great productive capacity of American farms and American factories, we must have a well-matched team, with agriculture, labor, and industry pulling evenly together toward the goal of the high standard of living we know we can produce. With such cooperation, there would be no question mark in 1946 and beyond. We then could plan our farming on the basis of "full steam ahead."



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ANNOUNCER'S OPENING AND CLOSING

OPENING

ANNOUNCER (LIVE):

What sort of plans shall farmers make this year? That's a question that's getting a lot of thought these days. All during the war, no matter how high farm production went, the need for food was greater than the supply. How will Peace affect this situation? Will the demand for the products of American farms continue high...or will they taper off when winter is over? Can farmers handle the job alone...or will they need the support of labor and industry? Let's see how this picture looks to the Secretary of Agriculture...Clinton P. Anderson. Here by transcription from Washington is Secretary Anderson.

CLOSING

ANNOUNCER (LIVE):

That, Farm Friends, was Clinton F. Anderson, Secretary of Agriculture...who thinks it's full steam ahead for farmers in 1946.

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